

# **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 11, 2012**

**THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 9:00am by Budget Committee Chairperson Mr. Vadenais.**

**ROLL CALL 9:00am: Present were Mrs. Vallee, Mrs. Nadeau, Mr. Puccetti, Mr. Vadenais, Mrs. Bartomioli**

**Present were School Committee members Ms. Bonas; Mr. Hemond; Ms. Johansen; Ms. Naradowy; School Superintendent Lindberg**

**Also present were Ms. Marcotte; Ms. Scripsak; Ms. Arnold; Mr. Brown; and Town Administrator Ms. Hamilton**

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**The School Committee presented its budget with the following discussion:**

**Superintendent Lindberg opened the meeting by stating that inadequate funding for the past 3 years has placed the School Department in a precarious position and has necessitated reductions including textbook spending; music and sports programs. There have been continual reductions in curriculum offerings including honors**

**and AP classes. Compliance to unfunded mandates and laws regulating classroom size are the biggest factors tying the hands of the School Committee.**

**Additionally there are significant increases next year in 1) Healthcare Costs; 2) Municipal Retirement Obligations; and 3) Contractual Teacher Compensation Increases.**

**Mr. Hemond presented his one page summary of the 2013 School Committee Budget:**

**Q Ms. Nadeau: Is the presence of a Social Worker and Psychologist in each school needed to be compliant with an unfunded mandate?**

**A Superintendent Lindberg: Yes and to the BEP**

**Q Ms. Nadeau: Are Teaching Assistants primarily assisting special needs children?**

**A Superintendent Lindberg: Yes**

**Mr. Brown stated that for the last 5 years out of district placements were for social and emotional behavioral supports.**

**Q Ms. Bartomioli: Is the placement choice the parents or the School Department?**

**A Mr. Brown: The School Department**

**Ms. Marcotte and Ms. Scripsak presented the FY13 Draft Budget Analysis with the following discussion:**

**The biggest Benefits Obligation increase is in Health Care.**

**Q Mr. Pucetti: Are there 3 separate unions?**

**A Ms. Scripsak: There are 2 unions-1) Teachers/Administrators and 2) Support Staff**

**Q Mr. Pucetti: Is the 2011 Audit Report done yet?**

**A Ms. Scripsak: Yes and we will get copies to the Budget Committee next week.**

**Q Mr. Vadenais: Would you explain the many line item transfers?**

**A Superintendent Lindberg: Any line item transfer is done with integrity. The budget is prepared 8 months prior to the end of the fiscal year. Reality is that we do our best to project costs and student needs. This is a live budget-we need to operate as reality plays out.**

**Q Ms. Bartomioli: Please explain the unemployment costs.**

**A Superintendent Lindberg: 37 teachers have already received potential layoff notices and they can collect unemployment until called back.**

**Q Ms. Bartomioli: Are layoffs based on seniority?**

**A Superintendent Lindberg: In the past, yes. Right now RI is**

**pioneering different venues-recalls won't be just on seniority, they will be based more on performance. This is not finalized and is something the Board of Regents and the Department of Education are working out.**

**Q Ms. Bartomioli: When is Marshfield Commons expected to be occupied?**

**A Town Administrator Ms. Hamilton: Next spring.**

**STATE APPROPRIATION ANALYSIS: Superintendent Lindberg said that the state is letting us down. This is the first year for the funding formula and he explained that the state has now added into that amount previously "restricted" aid. General State Aid is declining.**

**Q Mr. Vadenais: What is the fund balance recommendation?**

**A Mr. Wadovick: Towns SHOULD maintain a fund balance in the amount of 10-15% of the total fund. The School Department is a department within the town and a 2-5% would be suggested. I would recommend between \$2-3 hundred thousand.**

**During discussion of Personnel Staffing Superintendent Lindberg noted that within the past 2 months 6 students with "severe and profound" special needs have entered the system.**

**Additionally Mr. Lindberg noted that in order for the schools to be in compliance with the BEP-the current regulatory document for RI**

**schools-we would need to add several million dollars to the budget.**

**Q Ms. Nadeau: What is Curriculum Development?**

**A Ms. Arnold: Each town develops their own curriculum at their own rate. The curriculum must be compliant to Common Core Standards. The state provides the framework and individual school departments unpack the details.**

**Q Ms. Bartomioli: Why not just take advantage of Barrington's curriculum where the students consistently have the top test scores and save taxpayers the money?**

**A Ms. Arnold : The majority of the costs are to train teachers to the new curriculum so there would be no real savings to each department by simply copying the curriculum from another district.**

**The meeting was ended at 12:15pm.**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**Monday February 13th at 7:00pm at Kendall Dean.**

**Minutes respectfully submitted,**

**Merrie Nadeau**